



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

34 CFR Chapter III

[Docket ID ED-2022-OSERS-0038]

Final Priority and Requirements--Technical Assistance on  
State Data Collection--The Rhonda Weiss National Technical  
Assistance Center To Improve State Capacity To Collect,  
Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible  
Formats

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative  
Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Final priority and requirements.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department)  
announces a priority, including requirements, for the  
Rhonda Weiss National Technical Assistance Center to  
Improve State Capacity to Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use  
Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats (Accessible Data  
Center) under the Technical Assistance on State Data  
Collection program, Assistance Listing Number 84.373Q. The  
Department may use this priority for competitions in fiscal  
year (FY) 2022 and thereafter. We will use the priority to  
award a cooperative agreement for an Accessible Data Center  
to focus attention on an identified need to support States  
in collecting, reporting, analyzing, and publishing their  
data in formats that provide equitable access and  
visualizations to persons with disabilities, particularly

those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities. The Accessible Data Center will customize its technical assistance (TA) to meet each State's specific needs.

DATES: The final priority and requirements are effective [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Technical Assistance on State Data Collection program is to improve the capacity of States to meet the data collection and reporting requirements under Part B and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Funding for the program is authorized under section 611(c)(1) of IDEA. This section gives the Secretary authority to reserve not more than 1/2 of 1 percent of the amounts appropriated under Part B for each fiscal year to provide TA activities authorized under section 616(i) of IDEA, to improve the capacity of States to meet the data

collection and reporting requirements under Parts B and C of IDEA. The maximum amount the Secretary may reserve under this set-aside for any fiscal year is \$25,000,000, cumulatively adjusted by the rate of inflation. For FY 2022, the inflation adjusted amount is \$37,300,000.

Section 616(i) of IDEA requires the Secretary to review the data collection and analysis capacity of States to ensure that data and information determined necessary for implementation of section 616 of IDEA are collected, analyzed, and accurately reported to the Secretary. It also requires the Secretary to provide TA, where needed, to improve the capacity of States to meet the IDEA Part B and Part C data collection requirements, which include the data collection and reporting requirements in sections 616 and 618 of IDEA. In addition, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116-260, gives the Secretary authority to use funds reserved under section 611(c) of IDEA to provide TA to States to improve their capacity to administer and carry out other services and activities to improve data collection, coordination, quality, and use under Parts B and C of IDEA.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1411(c), 1416(i), 1418(c), 1442; and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116-260, 134 Stat. 1182, 1601.

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR 300.702.

We published a notice of proposed priority and requirements (NPP) for this program in the *Federal Register* on March 17, 2022 (87 FR 15148). That document contained background information and our reasons for proposing the particular priority, including the requirements.

There are no differences between the proposed priority and the final priority other than minor technical changes.

Public Comment: In response to our invitation in the NPP, seven parties submitted comments on the priority, including the requirements.

Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes, or suggested changes the law does not authorize us to make under the applicable statutory authority. In addition, we do not address general comments that raised concerns not directly related to the priority.

Analysis of Comments and Changes: An analysis of the comments follows.

Comment: Several commenters expressed general support for the proposed Accessible Data Center.

Discussion: We appreciate the commenters' support for the proposed Accessible Data Center.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter responded to our directed question about common challenges experienced by stakeholders with disabilities, particularly those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities, when accessing educational data on government websites. The commenter noted that many persons with visual and/or intellectual disabilities have trouble accessing information that is in either a table or graphical format because many screen readers do not recognize the information contained within, and magnifiers have limited utility.

Discussion: We agree with the commenter that screen readers and magnifiers alone are often insufficient for many persons with disabilities, particularly those with visual and/or intellectual disabilities, but also those with motor impairments. We also note that it is challenging to view data columns using screen readers and, when using magnifiers, heading and column descriptors do not automatically move when scrolling through Excel pages. Similarly, it can be difficult for persons with visual impairments to read and interpret charts and graphs that rely on chromatically similar colors to differentiate between data series, or where shading is not used to delineate the lines. Under the priority, applicants must propose tools they will develop, based on accessibility best practices, that exceed all Federal accessibility

requirements. For this reason, we do not feel additional specification in the priority is necessary.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter responded to our directed question about accessibility features and interactive elements of a data reporting system that are necessary to allow stakeholders with disabilities, particularly those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities, to access and use data to answer their essential questions. The commenter stated that necessary accessibility features include text-to-speech/screen reader, speech recognition, high contrast themes, magnifiers, keyboard shortcuts, sans serif fonts, and closed captioning on all videos referenced or used.

Discussion: We appreciate the commenter's response to the directed question. We agree with the commenter's list of accessibility features and interactive elements of a data reporting system to allow stakeholders with disabilities to access and use data to answer their essential questions. We note that the accessibility features and interactive elements identified by the commenter are consistent with current Federal accessibility requirements. Under the priority, applicants must propose tools they will develop, based on accessibility best practices, that exceed all Federal accessibility requirements and are designed to accommodate continued enhancements to meet States' changing

needs and updates in accessibility best practice.

Changes: None.

FINAL PRIORITY:

Technical Assistance on State Data Collection--The Rhonda Weiss<sup>1</sup> National Technical Assistance Center To Improve State Capacity To Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats.

Under this priority, the Department provides funding for a cooperative agreement to establish and operate the Rhonda Weiss National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Capacity to Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats (Accessible Data Center).

The Accessible Data Center will provide TA to help States better meet current and future IDEA Part B and Part C data collection and reporting requirements, improve data quality, and analyze and use the data reported to provide equitable access and visualizations to persons with disabilities. The Accessible Data Center's work will comply with the privacy and confidentiality protections in the IDEA Part B and C regulations, which incorporate provisions in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and include IDEA-specific provisions and will not provide the Department with access to child-level data. The Accessible

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<sup>1</sup> The Center is named in remembrance of Rhonda Weiss, who was a senior attorney with the U.S. Department of Education, a staunch advocate for disability rights, and a champion for ensuring equity and accessibility for persons with disabilities. For more information on Rhonda and her work to ensure equity and accessibility for persons with disabilities please see [www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/12/13/blind-government-lawyer-disabilities-rights/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/12/13/blind-government-lawyer-disabilities-rights/).

Data Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

- (a) Improved accessibility of the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported and published under IDEA sections 616 and 618;

- (b) Increased capacity of States to collect, report, analyze, and use high-quality IDEA Part B and Part C data in accessible formats;

- (c) Development of an open license, accessible software program, for the publication of dynamic data products (consistent with the open licensing requirement in 2 CFR 3474.20); and

- (d) Development and documentation of a knowledge base related to the accessible reporting and dynamic presentation of data.

In addition, the Accessible Data Center must provide a range of targeted and general TA products and services for improving States' capacity to accurately collect, report, analyze, and use IDEA section 616 and section 618 data in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, particularly those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities. Such TA must include, at a minimum--

- (a) Working with the Department to develop open-source electronic tools to assist States in reporting their IDEA data in accessible formats that allow for dynamic



visualizations that can be manipulated for persons with and without disabilities. The tools must utilize accessibility best practices, exceed all Federal accessibility requirements, and be designed to accommodate continued enhancements to meet States' changing needs and updates in accessibility best practice;

(b) Developing a plan to maintain appropriate functionality of the open-source electronic tools described in paragraph (a) as changes are made to data collections, reporting requirements, accessibility best practices, and accessibility requirements;

(c) Developing universal TA products, including a user manual and instructions, and conducting training with State staff on use of the open-source electronic tools; and

(d) Developing white papers and presentations that include tools and solutions to challenges in the collection, reporting, analysis, and use of IDEA data in accessible formats.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements in this priority, which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Significance of the Project," how the proposed project will--

(1) Address State challenges in collecting, analyzing, reporting, and using the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported under IDEA sections 616 and 618 in formats that are both accessible to persons with visual impairments and/or other disabilities and also dynamic, to promote enhanced data use that will improve data quality and identify programmatic strengths and areas for improvement. To meet this requirement the applicant must--

(i) Demonstrate knowledge of IDEA data collections, including data required under IDEA sections 616 and 618;

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of accessible reporting and dynamic visualization, and document areas for further knowledge development;

(iii) Present information about the difficulties State educational agencies (SEAs), State lead agencies (LAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), early intervention service (EIS) providers, and schools have encountered in meeting the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act when reporting IDEA data; and

(iv) Present information about the difficulties SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, EIS providers, and schools have in developing dynamic data visualizations for public use; and

(2) Improve outcomes in collecting, analyzing, reporting, and using the IDEA Part B and Part C data in formats that are accessible to persons with visual impairments and/or other disabilities.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of project services," how the proposed project will--

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe how it will--

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients and end users for TA and information; and

(ii) Ensure that products and services meet the needs of the intended TA recipients and end users;

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide--

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed

relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks:

[https://osepideasthatwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/ConceptualFramework\\_Updated.pdf](https://osepideasthatwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/ConceptualFramework_Updated.pdf) and [www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework](http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework).

(4) Be based on current research and use evidence-based practices (EBPs).<sup>2</sup> To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) The current research on the capacity of SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, and EIS providers to report and use data, specifically section 616 and section 618 data, in a manner that allows persons with vision and/or other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data, as both a means of improving data quality and identifying strengths and areas for improvement;

(ii) How it will analyze and incorporate the views of end users regarding the accessibility of tools currently available for data collection, reporting, analysis, and use. Specifically, how it will assess the overall accessibility,

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<sup>2</sup> For purposes of these requirements, "evidence-based practices" (EBPs) means, at a minimum, demonstrating a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

data manipulability, and the accessibility of dynamic data visualizations for persons with and without disabilities; and

(iii) How the proposed project will incorporate current research, EBPs, and the needs of end users in the development and delivery of its products and services;

(5) How it will develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How it proposes to identify or develop the knowledge base on the capacity needs of SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, and EIS programs/EIS providers to meet IDEA data collection and reporting requirements, data analysis, and use of the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported under IDEA sections 616 and 618 in a manner that allows individuals with vision and/or other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data;

(ii) Its proposed approach to universal, general TA,<sup>3</sup> which must identify the intended recipients, including the

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<sup>3</sup> "Universal, general TA" means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with Accessible Data Center staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by Accessible Data Center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the Accessible Data Center's website by independent users. Brief communications by Accessible Data Center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA.

type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach;

(iii) Its proposed approach to targeted, specialized TA,<sup>4</sup> which must identify--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach; and

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients to work with the project, assessing, at a minimum, their current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local level; and

(iv) Its proposed approach to intensive, sustained TA,<sup>5</sup> which must identify--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach;

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<sup>4</sup> "Targeted, specialized TA" means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more Accessible Data Center staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

<sup>5</sup> "Intensive, sustained TA" means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between Accessible Data Center staff and the TA recipient. "TA services" are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of SEA, State LAs, LEA, and EIS program/provider personnel to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the SEA, State LA, LEA, and EIS program/provider levels;

(C) Its proposed plan for assisting SEAs and State LAs (and LEAs, in conjunction with SEAs and EIS programs/providers, in conjunction with State LAs) to build or enhance training systems to meet IDEA Part B and Part C data collection and reporting requirements in a manner that allows individuals with vision and/or other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data. This includes professional development based on adult learning principles and coaching;

(D) Its proposed plan for working with appropriate levels of the education system (e.g., SEAs, State LAs, regional TA providers, LEAs, EIS providers, schools, and families) to ensure there is communication between each level and there are systems in place to support the capacity needs of SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, and EIS providers to meet IDEA data collection and reporting requirements, as well as support data analysis and the use of IDEA Part B and Part C data, in a manner that allows individuals with vision and/or

other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data; and

(E) Its proposed plan for collaborating and coordinating with Department-funded projects, including those providing data-related support to States, where appropriate, to align complementary work and jointly develop and implement products and services to meet the purposes of this priority. Such Department-funded projects include the IDEA Data Center (IDC), the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy), the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR), the Center for the Integration of IDEA Data (CIID), EdFacts, and the research and development investments of the Institute of Education Sciences/National Center for Education Statistics; and

(6) Its proposed plan to develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate and the intended outcomes of this collaboration; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the project evaluation," include an evaluation plan for the project developed in consultation with and



implemented by a third-party evaluator.<sup>6</sup> The evaluation plan must--

(1) Articulate formative and summative evaluation questions, including important process and outcome evaluation questions. These questions should be related to the project's proposed logic model required in paragraph (b) (2) (ii) of these requirements;

(2) Describe how progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes, will be measured to answer the evaluation questions. Specify the measures and associated instruments or sources for data appropriate to the evaluation questions. Include information regarding reliability and validity of measures where appropriate;

(3) Describe strategies for analyzing data and how data collected as part of this plan will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project and to refine the proposed logic model and evaluation plan, including subsequent data collection;

(4) Provide a timeline for conducting the evaluation and include staff assignments for completing the plan. The timeline must indicate that the data will be available

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<sup>6</sup> A "third-party" evaluator is an independent and impartial program evaluator who is contracted by the grantee to conduct an objective evaluation of the project. This evaluator must not have participated in the development or implementation of any project activities, except for the evaluation activities, or have any financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

annually for the annual performance report and at the end of Year 2 for the review process; and

(5) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of developing or refining the evaluation plan in consultation with a third-party evaluator, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Adequacy of resources," how--

(1) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits, and funds will be spent in a way that increases their efficiency and cost-effectiveness, including by reducing waste or achieving better outcomes.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the management plan," how--

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements:

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one- and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A two- and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, or virtually, during each year of the project period; and

(iii) Three annual two-day trips, or virtually, to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP;

(3) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of 5 percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual

set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period;

(4) Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility; and

(5) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to this new award period and at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Types of Priorities:

When inviting applications for a competition using one or more priorities, we designate the type of each priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational through a notice in the *Federal Register*. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by (1) awarding additional points, depending on the extent to which the application meets the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Invitational priority: Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the priority a preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

This document does not preclude us from proposing additional priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This document does not solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use this priority, we invite applications through a notice in the *Federal Register*.

#### Executive Orders 12866 and 13563

#### Regulatory Impact Analysis

Under Executive Order 12866, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must determine whether this regulatory action is "significant" and, therefore, subject to the requirements of the Executive order and subject to review by OMB. Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a "significant regulatory action" as an action likely to result in a rule that may--

(1) Have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, or adversely affect a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or Tribal governments or communities in a material way (also referred

to as an "economically significant" rule);

(2) Create serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency;

(3) Materially alter the budgetary impacts of entitlement grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or

(4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles stated in the Executive order.

This final regulatory action is not a significant regulatory action subject to review by OMB under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866. Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801 et seq.), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs designated this rule as not a "major rule," as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

We have also reviewed this final regulatory action under Executive Order 13563, which supplements and explicitly reaffirms the principles, structures, and definitions governing regulatory review established in Executive Order 12866. To the extent permitted by law, Executive Order 13563 requires that an agency--

(1) Propose or adopt regulations only upon a reasoned determination that their benefits justify their costs (recognizing that some benefits and costs are difficult to quantify);

(2) Tailor its regulations to impose the least burden on society, consistent with obtaining regulatory objectives and taking into account--among other things and to the extent practicable--the costs of cumulative regulations;

(3) In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, select those approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; distributive impacts; and equity);

(4) To the extent feasible, specify performance objectives, rather than the behavior or manner of compliance a regulated entity must adopt; and

(5) Identify and assess available alternatives to direct regulation, including economic incentives--such as user fees or marketable permits--to encourage the desired behavior, or provide information that enables the public to make choices.

Executive Order 13563 also requires an agency "to use the best available techniques to quantify anticipated present and future benefits and costs as accurately as possible." The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB has emphasized that these techniques may include "identifying changing future compliance costs that might result from technological innovation or anticipated behavioral changes."

We are issuing the final priority only on a reasoned



determination that its benefits justify its costs. In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, we selected those approaches that maximize net benefits. Based on the analysis that follows, the Department believes that this regulatory action is consistent with the principles in Executive Order 13563.

We also have determined that this regulatory action does not unduly interfere with State, local, and Tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

In accordance with these Executive orders, the Department has assessed the potential costs and benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, of this regulatory action. The potential costs are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering the Department's programs and activities.

#### Discussion of Potential Costs and Benefits

The Department believes that the costs associated with the final priority will be minimal, while the benefits are significant. The Department believes that this regulatory action does not impose significant costs on eligible entities. Participation in this program is voluntary, and the costs imposed on applicants by this regulatory action will be limited to paperwork burden related to preparing an application. The benefits of implementing the program to

focus attention on an identified need to improve State capacity to accurately collect, report, analyze, and use the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported under IDEA sections 616 and 618, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, will outweigh the costs incurred by applicants, and the costs of carrying out activities associated with the application will be paid for with program funds. For these reasons, we have determined that the costs of implementation will not be burdensome for eligible applicants, including small entities.

#### Regulatory Alternatives Considered

The Department believes that the priority is needed to administer the program effectively.

#### Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

The final priority contains information collection requirements that are approved by OMB under control number 1820-0028; the final priority does not affect the currently approved data collection.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification: The Secretary certifies that this final regulatory action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Size Standards define proprietary institutions as small businesses if they are independently owned and operated, are not dominant in their field of operation, and have total annual revenue below \$7,000,000. Nonprofit

institutions are defined as small entities if they are independently owned and operated and not dominant in their field of operation. Public institutions are defined as small organizations if they are operated by a government overseeing a population below 50,000.

The small entities that this final regulatory action will affect are LEAs, including charter schools that operate as LEAs under State law; institutions of higher education; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations. We believe that the costs imposed on an applicant by the final priority will be limited to paperwork burden related to preparing an application and that the benefits of this final priority will outweigh any costs incurred by the applicant.

Participation in the Accessible Data Center grant program is voluntary. For this reason, the final priority will impose no burden on small entities unless they apply for funding under the program. We expect that in determining whether to apply for Accessible Data Center funds, an eligible entity will evaluate the requirements of preparing an application and any associated costs and weigh them against the benefits likely to be achieved by receiving a grant to establish and operate the Accessible Data Center. An eligible entity will most likely apply only if it determines that the likely benefits exceed the

costs of preparing an application.

We believe that the final priority will not impose any additional burden on a small entity applying for a grant than the entity would face in the absence of the final action. That is, the length of the applications those entities would submit in the absence of the final regulatory action and the time needed to prepare an application will likely be the same.

This final regulatory action will not have a significant economic impact on a small entity once it receives a grant because it will be able to meet the costs of compliance using the funds provided under this program.

Intergovernmental Review: This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program.

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich

Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal Register*. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.govinfo.gov](http://www.govinfo.gov). At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the *Federal Register*, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

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Katherine Neas,  
*Deputy Assistant Secretary,  
delegated the authority to perform  
the functions and duties  
of the Assistant Secretary for the  
Office of Special Education and  
Rehabilitative Services.*

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